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6 in 10 U.S. adults doubt mental capability of Biden and Trump, AP-NORC poll finds

By JOSH BOAK and AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A poll finds that a significant share of U.S. adults doubt the mental capabilities of 81-year-old President Joe Biden and 77-year-old Donald Trump, the former president and current Republican front-runner in what could be a rematch of the 2020 election.

More than 6 in 10 (63%) say they're not very or not at all confident in Biden's mental capability to serve effectively as president, turning his coming State of the Union address into something of a real-time audition for a second term. A similar but slightly smaller share (57%) say that Trump lacks the memory and acuity for the job.

The findings from a new survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research point to a tough presidential election in which issues such as age and mental competence could be more prevalent than in any other political contest in modern times.

People's views of Biden's memory and acuity have soured since January 2022, when about half of those polled expressed similar concerns. (That survey didn't ask a similar question about Trump.) In a major risk for Biden, independents are much more likely to say that they lack confidence in his mental abilities (80%) compared with Trump's (56%).



President Joe Biden delivers his State of the Union speech to a joint session of Congress, at the Capitol in Washington, Feb. 7, 2023.

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6 in 10 U.S. adults doubt mental capability of Biden and Trump, AP-NORC poll finds

Continued from Front

And Democrats are generally more concerned about Biden's mental capabilities than Republicans are with Trump's, raising the stakes of Biden's upcoming speech to a joint session of Congress on Thursday.

Going into the big event, just 38% of U.S. adults approve of how Biden is handling his job as president, while 61% disapprove. Democrats (74%) are much likelier than independents (20%) and Republicans (6%) to favor his performance. But there's broad discontent on the way Biden is handling a variety of issues, including the economy, immigration and foreign policy.

About 4 in 10 Americans approve of the way Biden is handling each of these issues: health care, climate change, abortion policy and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. But people are less satisfied by Biden's handling of immigration (29%), the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians (31%) and the economy (34%) — all of which are likely to come up in the speech before a joint session of Congress.

Nearly 6 in 10 (57%) Americans think the national economy is somewhat or much worse off than before Biden took office in 2021. Only 3 in 10 adults say it's better under his leadership. Still, people are more optimistic about the state of their own bank accounts: 54% say their personal finances are good.

Many respondents to the sur-



In this combination of photos, President Joe Biden, left, speaks on Aug. 10, 2023, in Salt Lake City, and former President Donald Trump speaks on June 13, 2023, in Bedminster, N.J.

Associated Press

vey were deeply pessimistic about their likely choices in November because of age and the risk of cognitive decline. Paul Miller, himself 84, said Biden is just too old — and so is Trump.

"He doesn't seem to have the mental whatever to be a president," Miller said of Biden. He added that Trump is "too old, too, and half crazy."

The retiree from Carlisle, Pennsylvania, said he voted for Trump in 2020 but he wouldn't do so again.

"I don't think I'm going to vote for either one of them," he said. "I hope somebody else is available."

The president faces added pressure about his age after unflattering descriptions of him contained in a special coun-

sel's report that did not recommend criminal prosecution of Biden for his mishandling of classified records, unlike Trump who was indicted for keeping classified material in his Florida home. The report said that Biden's memory was "hazy," "fuzzy," "faulty," "poor" and had "significant limitations."

Biden has tried to deflect concerns by joking about his age and taking jabs at Trump's own gaffes. Yet the president's age is a liability that has overshadowed his policy achievements on infrastructure, manufacturing and addressing climate change. About one-third of Democrats said they're not very or not at all confident in Biden's mental capability in the new survey,

up from 14% in January 2022. Only 40% of Democrats said they're extremely or very confident in Biden's mental abilities, with approximately 3 in 10 saying they're "somewhat" confident.

Republicans are generally more comfortable with Trump's mental capabilities than Democrats are with Biden's. In the survey, 59% of Republicans are extremely or very confident that Trump has the mental abilities to be president. An additional 20% are somewhat confident, and 20% are not very or not at all confident.

But if there is one thing Democrats and Republicans can agree upon, it's that the other party's likely nominee is not mentally up to the task. About

9 in 10 Republicans say Biden lacks the mental capability to serve as president, while a similar share of Democrats say that about Trump.

Part of Biden's problem is that his policies have yet to break through the daily clutter of life. Sharon Gallagher, 66, worries about inflation. She voted for Biden in 2020, but believes he has not done enough for the economy. She also feels Trump is a bit too quick to anger. The Sarasota, Florida, resident said she doesn't have the bandwidth to really judge their policies.

"I don't pay enough attention to politics to even know," Gallagher said. "I have grandchildren living with me and I have children's shows on all day."

Justin Tjernlund, 40, from Grand Rapids, Michigan, said Biden "seems like he's mostly still there," but even if he was in decline he has "a whole army of people to help him do the job." Tjernlund said he voted for Trump in 2020 and plans to do so again because the Republican is "interesting" and "refreshing."

Still, because of both candidates' ages, Greg Olivo, 62, said he plans to focus on Vice President Kamala Harris and whomever Trump, if he's the nominee, picks for a running mate.

"Keep a close eye on the vice president," said the machinist from Valley City, Ohio, who voted for Biden in 2020 and would do so again. "Because that person will probably be the president in four years, one way or another." □



First lady Jill Biden listens to women discuss their concerns about gun violence, reproductive rights and other topics at Eat restaurant in downtown Las Vegas Saturday, March 2, 2024.

Associated Press

First lady Jill Biden honors 'women of courage' at White House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — First lady Jill Biden hosted a White House ceremony on Monday for "women of courage" who have fought political repression, sexual violence, economic hardship and gender discrimination around the world.

"You've spoken out for yourselves and for others in the face of fear and risk, and those who have tried

to steal your voices away," Biden said. She added, "Change never happens on its own. There is power in this community of women." Twelve women received the awards, which were distributed by the U.S. Department of State. It was the 18th year the awards have been given out. Among the honorees were a lawyer from Myanmar, a former political prisoner

from Belarus, a disability rights advocate from Afghanistan and a teacher from Ecuador.

One of the honorees, Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello, was not able to attend because she was not allowed to leave her home country of Cuba. She's faced detention and harassment during her decades of advocacy for human rights and political freedom. □

White House defends Harris meeting with Israeli Cabinet official despite Netanyahu's concerns

By **AAMER MADHANI** and
SEUNG MIN KIM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris and other top Biden administration officials were holding talks on Monday with a member of Israel's wartime Cabinet who came to Washington in defiance of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

White House officials said Benny Gantz, a centrist political rival of Netanyahu, requested the meeting and the Democratic administration believed it was important to meet with the prominent Israeli official despite Netanyahu's objections.

The meeting comes as President Joe Biden, Harris and other senior administration officials have become increasingly blunt about their dissatisfaction with the mounting death toll in Gaza and suffering of innocent Palestinians as the war nears the five-month mark. "We're going to discuss a number of things in terms of the priorities that certainly we have, which includes getting a hostage deal done, getting aid in and then getting that six-week ceasefire," Harris told reporters before her meeting with Gantz.

The U.S. on Saturday carried out the first of what is expected to be ongoing airdrops of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

The moment is reflective of the increasingly awkward dynamics in the U.S.-Israel relationship, with the U.S. forced to fly badly needed aid past its close ally as it looks to ramp up assistance for desperate civilians in Gaza.

The first airdrop occurred just days after more than 100 Palestinians were killed as they were trying to get food from an Israel-organized convoy.

The White House agreed to the meeting with Gantz even as an official from Netanyahu's nationalist Likud party said Gantz did not have approval from the



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks as she meets with voting rights leaders, in the Indian Treaty Room, Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024, of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex in Washington.

Associated Press

prime minister for his meetings in Washington. Netanyahu gave Gantz a "tough talk" about the visit underscoring a widening crack within Israel's wartime leadership.

"We have been dealing with all members of the war Cabinet, including Mr. Gantz," White House national security spokesman John Kirby said. "We see this as a natural outgrowth of those discussions. We're not going to turn away that sort of opportunity."

In addition to his talks with Harris, Gantz is meeting on Monday with National Security Council Middle East coordinator Brett McGurk and Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser. Gantz was also scheduled to meet on Monday with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

And he will meet with Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday.

Gantz just before the start of his White House meetings told a reporter with Israel's public broadcaster Kan: "There will be an open and honest conversation between two friendly and important countries and

partners."

Biden is at Camp David, the presidential retreat just outside Washington, until Tuesday as he prepares to deliver the annual State of the Union address later this week.

Over the weekend, Harris issued a forceful call for a temporary cease-fire deal in Gaza, which administration officials say would halt fighting for at least six weeks, and also increased pressure on Israel not to impede the aid that workers were trying to get into the region. The White House has been advocating for that framework deal for weeks.

Israel has essentially agreed to the deal, according to a senior Biden administration official, and the White House has emphasized that the onus is on Hamas to come on board.

Biden faces mounting political pressure at home over his administration's handling of the Israeli-Hamas war, which was triggered when militants in Gaza launched an attack, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 people hostage. In last week's Michigan presidential primary, more

than 100,000 Democratic primary voters cast ballots for "uncommitted." Biden still easily won the state's primary, but the coordinated push by voters on the left who are dissatisfied with the president's unwavering support for Israel as its military operations in Gaza have left more than 30,000 Palestinians dead. The vote totals raise concerns for Democrats in a state Biden won by only 154,000 votes in 2020.

Gantz, who polls show could be a formidable candidate for prime minister if a vote were held today, is viewed as a political moderate. But he has remained vague about his view of Palestinian statehood something that Biden sees as essential to forging a lasting peace once the conflict ends but that Netanyahu adamantly opposes.

It is also assumed that when the heavy fighting subsides, Gantz will leave the government, which would increase pressure for early elections.

Since Gantz joined Netanyahu's three-minister war Cabinet in October, U.S. officials have found him to be easier to deal with than ei-

ther Netanyahu or Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Although Gantz holds many of the same hardline views as Netanyahu and Gallant, he has been seen as more open to compromise on critical issues, including the increased delivery of humanitarian assistance that will be a prime topic of discussion in the meetings in Washington this week.

Until now, calls for elections have been muted due to the war, but analysts think that when Gantz leaves the government, it will send a signal to the Israeli public that the need for national unity has passed and efforts to oust Netanyahu's government can begin in earnest.

For his part while in Washington, Gantz aims to strengthen ties with the U.S., bolster support for Israel's war and push for the release of Israeli hostages, according to a second Israeli official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't allowed to publicly discuss the disputes within the Israeli government. Gantz is scheduled to head to London for meetings after his U.S. visit.

It remains to be seen if Gantz while in Washington will diverge from Netanyahu's stances on Palestinian statehood or carrying out an expanded operation in the southernmost Gaza city of Rafah.

The Biden administration has repeatedly warned Israel against a Rafah operation without a plan to protect civilians.

"I don't doubt there are some administration officials who believe just by meeting with Gantz they are undermining Netanyahu," said Richard Goldberg, a senior adviser at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a conservative Washington think tank. "But if Gantz carries the government's line on key issues of disagreement, these meetings are net-negative for the White House while helpful back home for Gantz." □

Pentagon leaker Jack Teixeira pleads guilty under a deal that calls for at least 11 years in prison

By **ALANNA DURKIN RICHER**
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Massachusetts Air National Guard member Jack Teixeira pleaded guilty on Monday to leaking highly classified military documents about the war in Ukraine and other national security secrets under a deal with prosecutors that calls for him to serve at least 11 years in prison.

Teixeira, of North Dighton, Massachusetts, pleaded guilty to six counts of willful retention and transmission of national defense information under the Espionage Act nearly a year after he was arrested in the most consequential national security leak in years.

The 22-year-old admitted illegally collecting some of the nation's most sensitive secrets and sharing them with other users on Discord, a social media platform popular with people playing online games.

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani scheduled sentencing for September in Boston's federal court and said she would decide then whether to formally accept the agreement, which calls for a prison sentence between 11 and nearly 17



This artist depiction shows Massachusetts Air National Guardsman Jack Teixeira, right, appearing in U.S. District Court in Boston, April 14, 2023.

years. Prosecutors said they plan to seek the high end of that range.

"Mr. Teixeira callously disregarded the national security of the United States and he betrayed his solemn oath to defend the country and the trust of the American people he swore to protect," Matt Olsen, assistant attorney general for national security, told reporters after the hearing.

The stunning security

breach raised alarm over America's ability to protect its most closely guarded secrets and forced the Biden administration to scramble to try to contain diplomatic and military fallout. The leaks embarrassed the Pentagon, which tightened controls to safeguard classified information and disciplined members found to have intentionally failed to take required action about Teixeira's suspicious behav-

ior.

Teixeira smiled at his father before being led out of the courtroom with his hands and legs shackled, wearing orange jail garb and black rosary beads around his neck.

He stood flanked by defense attorneys through much of the hearing and occasionally leaned down to speak into the microphone to answer questions from the judge.

Michael Bachrach, an attorney for Teixeira, told reporters they will push for a sentence of 11 years. Bachrach described Teixeira as a "kid," adding that the defense will show at sentencing that his youth played a significant role in his conduct.

"He is significantly remorseful for his conduct. He has accepted full responsibility for his conduct," Bachrach said.

In an emailed statement, Teixeira's family said: "It is unfathomable to think your child would ever be involved in something so serious, but he has taken responsibility for his part in this, and here we are."

"Our focus now remains on Jack his protection, health, and well-being, and taking care of whatever is in his best interest," they said.

Teixeira, who was part of the 102nd Intelligence Wing at Otis Air National Guard Base in Massachusetts, worked as a cyber transport systems specialist, essentially an information technology specialist responsible for military communications networks. He remains in the Air National Guard in an unpaid status, an Air Force official said. □

Associated Press

Latest attempt to chip away at 'Obamacare' questions preventive health care

By **KEVIN MCGILL**
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A federal appeals court was

scheduled to hear arguments Monday on whether former President Barack Obama's signature health

care law requires full insurance coverage of certain types of preventive care, including HIV prevention and some types of cancer screenings.

A federal judge in Texas said last year that it doesn't. U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor in Fort Worth ruled that some of the preventive care requirements of the 2010 law are unconstitutional. If upheld, his ruling could affect coverage and costs for anywhere from 100 million to 150 million people, according to analyses by health care advocates.

The coverage mandates remain in effect for now.

O'Connor's ruling applied nationwide but it was put on hold pending the arguments at the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

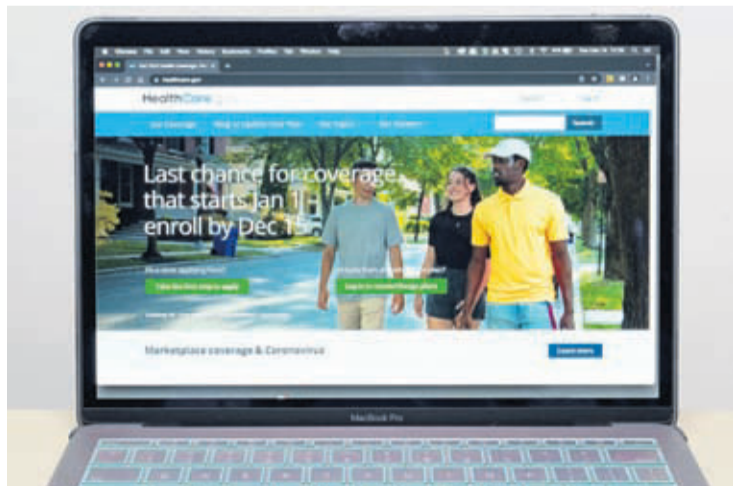
Not all preventive care was threatened by O'Connor's ruling. An analysis by the nonprofit KFF foundation found that some screenings, including mammography and cervical cancer screening, would still be covered without out-of-pocket costs because the task force recommended them before the health care law was enacted in March 2010.

The Biden administration is appealing the ruling.

Meanwhile, plaintiffs in the case have filed a cross-appeal that could broaden O'Connor's ruling and endanger more preventive care mandates, according to the advocacy group, United States of Care.

The requirements for coverage are driven by recommendations by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, which is made up of volunteers.

O'Connor ruled that enforcing the recommendations was "unlawful" and a violation of the Constitution's Appointment Clause, which lays out how government officials can be appointed. □



The healthcare.gov website is seen on Dec. 14, 2021, in Fort Washington, Md.

Associated Press

Strikes along Israel-Lebanon border kill 4 people as US envoy visits Beirut to press a cease-fire

By **BASSEM MROUE**
and **MELANIE LIDMAN**
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — An Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon killed three paramedics from the militant group Hezbollah on Monday, state media said, hours after a missile strike blamed on the militants killed at least one foreign worker in northern Israel. The deadly violence Monday came as a senior U.S. envoy visited Beirut and warned that a Gaza truce wouldn't necessarily apply to conflict along the Lebanon-Israel border. Amos Hochstein urged the parties to reach a lasting cease-fire at the border following meetings Monday with Lebanese leaders.

His comments came hours after the deputy leader of Lebanon's militant group Hamas, Naim Kassem, said the only way to restore calm along the border is to end the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Since the Israel-Hamas war started, Hezbollah has been exchanging fire with Israel almost daily, displacing thousands of people and spiking fear that the conflict may spread through the region. In northern Israel, 60,000 people have evacuated, the Israeli government says.

"People won't come back anytime soon, they're



Israeli security forces in Kiryat Shoma, northern Israel, evacuate a wounded Thai man after he was hit by an anti-tank missile fired from Lebanon, in a nearby village on Monday, March 4, 2024. Associated Press

scared, it's dangerous," Haim Menus, 70, said Monday while buying hardware at one of the rare stores open in the nearly abandoned northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona. He is one of the few who have remained, working curtailed hours at a bakery.

"An anti-tank missile could come at any time," Menus said. Moments later, an anti-tank missile struck a field in the nearby community of Margalioth as sirens blared, killing one Indian worker and injuring seven other foreign workers from India

and Thailand, according to the Israel Rescue Services and the Israeli army. Paramedics evacuated the injured two of them in serious condition to hospitals via ambulance and helicopter. The Israeli military said they struck the source of the launches as well as additional Hezbollah military infrastructure in southern Lebanon.

In Lebanon, the state-run National News Agency said that one of the Israeli airstrikes killed three paramedics with Hezbollah's Islamic Health Society in the

border village of Oddaiseh. Meanwhile, Hezbollah said its fighters aborted two infiltration attempts the night before by Israeli troops into a border area in southern Lebanon. It also said that its fighters carried out three attacks targeting Israeli posts along the border.

In Beirut, Hochstein, a senior adviser to U.S. President Joe Biden, began his talks by meeting Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally. He later met with caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati and the army commander,

Gen. Joseph Aoun.

"The United States remains committed to advancing lasting security solutions achieved through diplomatic process," Hochstein told reporters after he met Berri. He said such a move would allow tens of thousands of Lebanese and Israelis who were displaced by the conflict "to safely return" to their homes.

Hochstein's visit came as the U.S., Qatar and Egypt have been trying for weeks to broker a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas and to convince the Palestinian militant group to release some of the scores of hostages it is still holding since the Oct. 7 attack that sparked the war.

Since the Israel-Hamas war began, more than 215 Hezbollah fighters and nearly 40 civilians were killed on the Lebanese side while in Israel, nine soldiers and 10 civilians were left dead in the attacks.

"I'm mindful that my arrival comes on the heels of a tense few weeks on both sides of the border," Hochstein said.

"An escalation will certainly not help Lebanon rebuild and advance forward at this critical time in Lebanon's history," he added in an apparent reference to Lebanon's economic crisis since 2019. □

3 men suspected in the disappearance of a U.S. sailing couple ordered deported from St. Vincent



Police transport escaped prisoners Atiba Stanislaus, far left, and Trevon Robertson who are handcuffed together in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Monday, March 4, 2024.

Associated Press

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent (AP) — Three men from Grenada suspected in the disappearance of a U.S. couple whose catamaran was hijacked were ordered deported from St. Vincent on Monday.

The men, Trevon Robertson, a 19-year-old unemployed man; Abita Stanislaus, a 25-year-old farmer and Ron Mitchell, a 30-year-old sailor, had pleaded guilty to immigration charges in a court in the eastern Caribbean island of St. Vincent.

Senior Magistrate Colin John ordered that they be repatriated "as soon as practicable."

The men had escaped from a police holding cell in Grenada on Feb. 18 and are suspected of hijacking the catamaran while Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel were aboard.

Police have said they believe the couple were thrown overboard as the suspects sailed to St. Vincent, where they were arrested on Feb. 21. They

have not been charged in the case. The investigation is ongoing, with authorities noting there were signs of violence aboard the couple's boat found abandoned in St. Vincent.

The nonprofit Salty Dawg Sailing Association described Hendry and Brandel as "veteran cruisers" who participated in last year's Caribbean Rally from Hampton, Virginia, to Antigua, and had planned to spend the winter cruising in the eastern Caribbean. □

Haiti orders a curfew after gangs overrun its two largest prisons

By **EVENS SANON** and **PIERRE-RICHARD LUXAMA**
Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

— Authorities in Haiti have ordered a nighttime curfew after an explosion of violence when gang gunmen overran the two biggest prisons and freed thousands of inmates over the weekend. A 72-hour state of emergency began Sunday night. The government said it would set out to find the killers, kidnappers and other criminals who fled.

"The police were ordered to use all legal means at their disposal to enforce the curfew and apprehend all offenders," said a statement from Finance Minister Patrick Boivert, the acting prime minister.

Gangs already were estimated to control up to 80% of Port-au-Prince, the capital. They are increasingly coordinating their actions and choosing once unthinkable targets like the Central Bank.

Prime Minister Ariel Henry traveled abroad last week to try to salvage support for a United Nations-backed security force to help stabilize Haiti in its conflict with the increasingly powerful crime groups.

Haiti's National Police has roughly 9,000 officers to provide security for more



An inmate helps another prisoner inside the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Sunday, March 3, 2024.

Associated Press

than 11 million people, according to the U.N. They are routinely overwhelmed and outgunned.

The deadly weekend marked a new low in Haiti's downward spiral of violence. At least nine people had been killed since Thursday — four of them police officers as gangs stepped up coordinated attacks on state institutions in Port-au-Prince, including the international airport and national soccer stadium.

But the attack on the National Penitentiary late

Saturday shocked Haitians who are accustomed to living under the constant threat of violence.

Almost all of the estimated 4,000 inmates escaped. Three bodies with gunshot wounds lay at the prison entrance Sunday.

In another neighborhood, the bloodied corpses of two men with their hands tied behind the backs lay face down as residents walked past roadblocks set up with burning tires.

Among the few dozen people who chose to stay

in prison are 18 former Colombian soldiers accused of working as mercenaries in the July 2021 assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse. "Please, please help us," one of the men, Francisco Uribe, said in a message widely shared on social media. "They are massacring people indiscriminately inside the cells." Colombia's foreign ministry has called on Haiti to provide "special protection" for the men.

A second Port-au-Prince prison containing around

1,400 inmates was also overrun. Gunfire was reported in several neighborhoods in the capital. Internet service for many residents was down as Haiti's top mobile network said a fiber optic cable connection was slashed during the rampage.

After gangs opened fire at Haiti's international airport last week, the U.S. Embassy said it was halting all official travel to the country. On Sunday night, it urged all American citizens to depart as soon as possible.

The Biden administration, which has refused to commit troops to any multinational force for Haiti while offering money and logistical support, said it was monitoring the rapidly deteriorating security situation with grave concern.

The surge in attacks follows violent protests that turned deadlier in recent days as the prime minister went to Kenya seeking to move ahead on the proposed U.N.-backed security mission to be led by that East African country.

Henry took over as prime minister following Moïse's assassination and has postponed plans to hold parliamentary and presidential elections, which haven't happened in almost a decade. □

The Church of England aims to raise more than \$1 billion to address its past links to slavery



Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby delivers his speech as Pope Francis presides over the first vespers on the day the Catholic church celebrates the conversion of St. Paul, in the St. Paul's Basilica, in Rome, on Jan. 25, 2024.

Associated Press

By **JILL LAWLESS**

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The Church of England should create a fund of 1 billion pounds (\$1.27 billion) to address its historic links to slavery, an advisory panel said Monday. That's 10 times the amount the church previously set aside.

An independent oversight group established by the church said a 100-million-pound fund announced last year was insufficient compared to the wealth of the church and "the moral sin and crime of African chattel enslavement."

The Church Commissioners, the church's financial arm, said it accepted the

group's recommendations, including a target of 1 billion pounds "and above" for a pool of money known as the Fund for Healing, Repair and Justice.

The church said it won't immediately add to its 100-million-pound commitment. But it will spend the initial money over five years, rather than nine as originally scheduled, and hopes to start distributing it by the end of the year, said Church Commissioners Chief Executive Gareth Mostyn.

He said other institutions or individuals wishing to address their own slavery links

could add to the fund and "join us on this journey."

The fund was established as part of efforts by the Anglican church to reckon with its historic complicity in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The Church Commissioners, which administers the church's 10 billion-pound (\$12.7 billion) wealth fund, hired forensic accountants in 2019 to dig through the church's archives for evidence of slave trade links.

They found that the church's huge assets had their roots in Queen Anne's Bounty, a fund established in 1704 to help support impoverished clergy. □

Food culture in Aruba

(Oranjestad) - Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick “to-go” breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands* include sopi di bonchi cora (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening “meal” can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

(Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include, bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (dark fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco*, basket, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun. □

*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

*Saco: Saco literally means “bag”. Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chicken (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag.

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba



Happiness starts with a delectable breakfast at Paseo Herencia



ORANJESTAD – Want to make your morning a little brighter and enjoyable? Start your day with a luscious cup of coffee and unique and local flavors at Paseo Herencia!

Che Bar

Opening at 7:30am, Che Bar offers a variety of coffee including Lavazza and Nespresso, juice, and delicious breakfast items like bagels, eggs and sandwiches. However, they are famous for their delicious and authentic empanadas! The dough is brought all the way from Argentina, so you are getting the characteristic flavor of a traditional empanada. These savory, crispy pastries come with different fillings like chicken, egg, bacon and cheese, or beef. We can guarantee they will leave you wanting more.



If you're craving something sweet, you can opt for a waffle, as they come in delicious and surprising flavors like banana con dulce de leche and s'mores!

Che Bar recently changed their concept and now has indoor tables with air conditioning, and an outdoor bar for al fresco drinks. They are also introducing a tapas concept soon, to delight your taste buds with different and fascinating flavors. And if you're looking for a great deal, Che Bar has a Happy Hour from 5pm to 11pm which includes cocktails, shots, Aruban beer and for those looking for something special, Argentinean wines!

Drunk's Denial

Drunk's Denial is a quaint gourmet café, with a twist. Here you can have exquisite gourmet food infused with a touch of alcohol! We tasted the espresso with amaretto, a rich combination of flavors with subtle hints that delight the senses. This café



is owned by an Aruban, and each dish was originally created by the owners inspired on gourmet flavors, and you won't find any of their recipes anywhere else.

Drunk's Denial offers breakfast starting at 8am, so you can stop by for Dutch pancakes or crêpes. Tessa Pietersz, owner of Drunk's Denial, explained that the difference between a crêpe and a Dutch pancake is that the crêpes are thinner and folded, while the Dutch pancake uses the same amount of batter but makes a thicker pancake. For both of these you can choose to have your toppings be infused with alcohol – you can choose between fresh or drunken fruits. For example, you can have a delicious rum raisin crêpe with the raisins infused with the rum,

and a scoop of ice cream to sweeten your day.

They also offer waffles, yoghurt bowls, eggs and more! And don't miss their succulent and fresh alcohol-infused cakes.

Pietersz also explained that sustainability is important to them, and Drunk's Denial is ecologically conscious, and try to minimize food waste by providing sensible, yet indulgent portions.

Paseo Herencia offers free parking in the morning until noon, and is located close to the hotel areas, making it easily accessible and a walk away from the nearest beach! Start your day with a luxurious experience by having a delectable breakfast at Paseo Herencia. ☐



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**A guide for the perfect picture
Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad**

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're taking a stroll in the city center, and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Oranjestad is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad.



"I LOVE ARUBA"

Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign that reads "I LOVE ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, espe-

cially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.

Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park, in front of Talk of the Town Hotel. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!



The sitting bull

Yes, you read that right; right in the heart of the city center, in front of the Crystal Casino in the Renaissance Mall, there is a black bull

sitting on a bench, waiting for you to take a picture with it. Ok, so it's not a real bull, but "I took a picture with a sitting bull" sounds like a great conversation opener.

See if you can also spot the cow on the roof!

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in front of the Renaissance Mall, check out the wooden swing on the other side of the mall on Plaza Daniel Leo. Another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram. Just pass through the Renaissance Mall and find this gem in front of the back entrance!

Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Renaissance Dock

Last but certainly not least, the Renaissance Dock is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture,



especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Renaissance Market Place, and runs from the Renaissance Marina up to Renaissance Beach and Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas! ☐



**Celebrate National Hymn & Flag Day with the locals
Check out the Aruban seal light display at Cas di Luz in San Nicolas!**

(Oranjestad)—The organization Casita di Luz has just announced that they are having a light display shown of the Aruban Seal at Cas di Luz in San Nicolas in celebration of the National Hymn & Flag Day.

The light display will be turned on everyday for all to enjoy! From Sunday to Thursday, the display will be on from 6:30 pm to 11 pm. From Friday and Saturday it will be on from 6:30 pm to 12 am. This piece was constructed and designed by Nino Kock along with several helpers that have contributed to this beautiful, bright display. Don't miss out on one of the most special holiday for the Aruban culture; stay tuned for more information on activities to come! ☐

Photo credit goes to Casita di Luz on Facebook.

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from our awesome visitor, Karalyn from New Jersey, USA.

She wrote to us saying: ""Aruba to me is making connections and living dreams. We met so many people with great stories and happy vibes. Thank you for a wonderful stay!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □



Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.

Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, pre-



serve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December



2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □

Aruba's underwater wonderland



ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken world war two ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling

and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Algiers section
- 7 Pull along
- 11 Each
- 12 Franc's replacement
- 13 Beatrix Potter character
- 15 Leg bone
- 16 Panning find
- 18 Sirius, for one
- 21 Painter Magritte
- 22 Shrewd
- 24 Have something
- 25 Fish eggs
- 26 Sense of self
- 27 Knight's foe
- 29 Londoner, e.g.
- 30 Set eyes on
- 31 Night fliers
- 32 One a-courting
- 34 Animated film character
- 40 Bad time for Caesar
- 41 "That's it!"
- 42 Borscht veggie
- 43 Declared

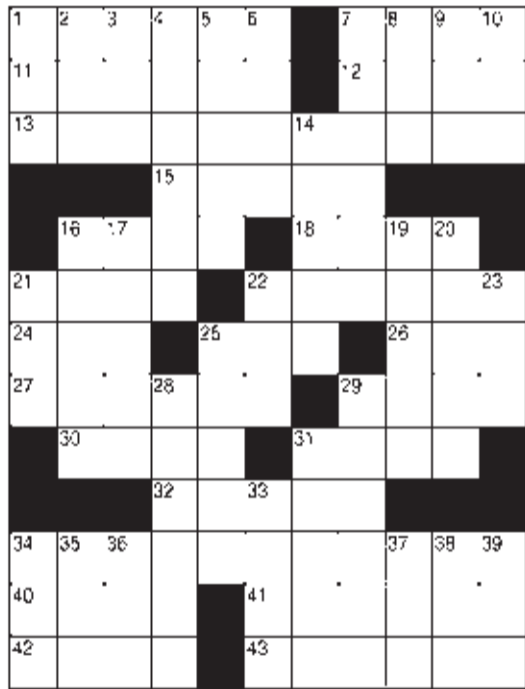
DOWN

- 1 Beanie or beret
- 2 Galoot
- 3 Use the couch
- 4 Scarab or ladybug
- 5 Tart
- 6 Thyme or tarragon
- 7 Campaign event
- 8 Massage
- 9 Onassis nickname
- 10 Received
- 14 Usher's place
- 16 Bike parts
- 17 Like draft beer
- 19 Turn away



Yesterday's answer

- 20 TV's Philbin
- 21 Carmine
- 22 Take in
- 23 Turn bad
- 25 Copter part
- 28 Advice to a young man
- 29 Singer Streisand
- 31 Hum-dinger
- 33 Metal sources
- 34 Vault part
- 35 Praiseful poem
- 36 "My word!"
- 37 Wager
- 38 Presidential nickname
- 39 Small bit



3-5

AXYDI BAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-5 CRYPTOQUOTE

YGUX UX YGA OAFMWVA NM
VLFEG: FLUD. CNLV.
MALYGAFX, VUDY. — CUXL

HCAKOLX

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: OUT OF A MISTY DREAM, OUR PATH EMERGES FOR A WHILE, THEN CLOSES WITHIN A DREAM. — ERNEST DOWSON

Arkhouse and Brigade up Macy's takeover offer to \$6.6 billion following rejection of previous deal



Shoppers enter a Macy's department store in Bay Shore, Long Island, New York, Dec. 12, 2023.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Arkhouse Management and Brigade Capital Management are upping their offer to acquire Macy's in a deal now valued at \$6.6 billion.

The investment firms announced Sunday that they had submitted an all-cash proposal of \$24 for each of the remaining shares in Macy's they don't already own — up from a earlier offer of \$21 per share.

Macy's rejected the previous deal, which was valued at \$5.8 billion, in January. At the time, the retailer said that its board reviewed the investment firms' proposal and not only had concerns about the financing plan, but also felt there was a "lack of compelling value."

In a joint-statement Sunday, Arkhouse managing partners Gavriel Kahane and Jonathon Blackwell said that they "remain frustrated by the delay tactics" from Macy's board and its "continued refusal to engage" but were still committed to completing the transaction. □

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Movie Review: The colossal melancholy of Ceylan's 'About Dry Grasses'

By **JAKE COYLE**
AP Film Writer

Nuri Bilge Ceylan makes long films, by movie standards, but short ones by Russian literature standards. There may be no filmmaker more consciously working in a novelistic tradition. The Turkish director counts reading "Crime and Punishment" as a formative experience. His Palme d'Or-winning 2014 film "Winter Sleep" adapted a pair of Chekhov short stories. But regardless of any direct correlations, Ceylan's films colossal, existential, talky reach for (and often attain) an enveloping vastness that recalls those big 19th century books. He sets thorny stories peppered with prickly philosophical questions against expansive landscapes. His films don't burrow into you, you burrow into them.

Ceylan's latest, "About Dry Grasses," bears a name that like his "The Wild Pear Tree" or "Once Upon a Time in Anatolia" would do well as a parody arthouse title. The opening in which a dark figure, seen from afar, steps off a bus onto a snow-blanketed plain on the Eastern Anatolian steppes is likewise not hiding its tone of solemnity.

Our solitary man is Samet (Deniz Celiloğlu), who, like Paul Giamatti's protagonist in "The Holdovers," is a snobbish, misanthropic ed-



This image released by Janus and Sideshow Films shows a scene from "About Dry Grasses." Associated Press

ucator in a malcontented winter. Countless movies like "The Holdovers" have conditioned us to feel an automatic sympathy for such teacher characters, but doubts steadily accrue about Samet.

He's not especially friendly with his colleague and roommate Kenan (Musab Ekiçci). When he's reluctantly set up for tea with a fellow teacher, Nuray (an exceptional Merve Dizdar, winner of best actress at Cannes), from a nearby village, he mostly moans about the backwardness of their rural region. His four-year term is nearly up, and he says he's bound for Istanbul. At school, Samet styles himself as a less rule-bound teacher, looking down on some of his colleagues. But

he's no inspiring leader to his young students, either. "None of you will become artists," he says in one rant. Later, Samet will ask: "Does everyone have to be a hero?" He, certainly, is more of the anti-hero variety, but he's also one of the most complicated main characters I've seen in years. He's quite bitter, particularly after the student he has the warmest relationship with Sevim (Ece Bağcı) accuses him of inappropriate behavior. She does it as a way to get back at him for concealing a love letter she wrote that was confiscated. He appears to be innocent, but there's also something unmistakably intimate about their interactions.

He gives her discrete gifts

and and purposefully leaves the door open when she visits his office.

Samet is investigated for not "respecting distance" with Sevim and her classmates, a somewhat ironic charge given that Samet, a sour pessimist, seems to be keeping himself at a distance to most everything. "About Dry Grasses" tracks the investigation of Samet, yet it hinges more on his relationship with Nuray. She bears a limp, a result of a suicide bombing during a protest in Ankara.

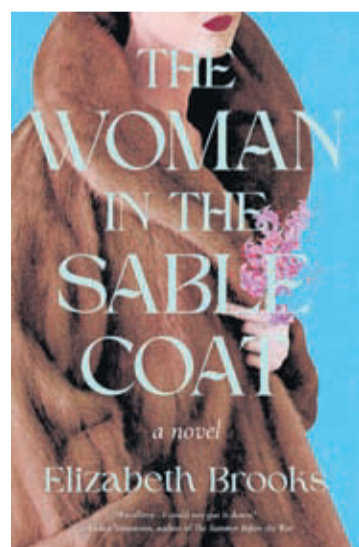
In the film's centerpiece scene, they spar over dinner in an extended dialogue about politics. She has fight and spirit still in her, and believes in the benefits of community. Samet is more hopeless and jad-

ed, a quality that attracts Nuray, almost against her wishes. Not because she agrees with Samet but because she fears, maybe, that he's right.

Ceylan has a knack for prolonging such debates in his films past their natural end point, turning the exchanges into something that can feel too dryly essayist. But it also may be his nature to bring a film to the very brink of philosophical quandary. In "About Dry Grasses," he goes a step further with a fourth-wall flourish at the height of Samet and Nuray's conversation. Why, at this point, does Ceylan insert a stark reminder that this is a movie? Is it his own Samet-like withdraw or a sudden flash of candid revelation?

Either way, it goes to the heart of Ceylan as a filmmaker. Far from just a bookish movie director, he has adopted many of cinematic modes of his heroes, Tarkovsky and Bergman, and translated them into his own unique and still evolving vernacular.

As much as Russian literature may be a foundation for him, his movies are richly of Turkey. There are aspects of "About Dry Grasses" the ID-checking police, the sexist bureaucrats in the school system — that place the Samet-Nuray dichotomy in a social context that has surely shaped them. □



This cover image released by Tin House Books shows "The Woman in the Sable Coat" by Elizabeth Brooks.

Associated Press

Elizabeth Brooks' Austen-esque WWII novel has romance, betrayal and a touch of macabre

By **DONNA EDWARDS**
Associated Press

In a chance meeting in 1934, Nina hosts a dinner party. She's 14, trying on womanhood for the first time, and even the drunken foolery of Guy Nicholson and his friend can't outweigh the growing importance of his gaze. Before she knows it, she's smitten. "The Woman in the Sable Coat" primarily takes place in a small village outside of English author Elizabeth Brooks' native Chester,

though reaching as far as Canada. And, recalling elements from her previous three novels, women take the spotlight in family dramas backlit by World War II with occasional flickers toward thriller or mystery as chapters flip between Guy's wife, Kate, in the first person, and Nina in the third. Years after that disaster of a dinner party, when war is declared, Nina follows Guy to the Royal Air Force by joining the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. It

takes a while, but she gets her chance her leaving behind her widower father and a string of boyfriends claimed by the war; him leaving behind a doomed marriage and a son. Kate, meanwhile, diverts her worried thoughts away from her own predicament and toward Nina's father, Henry, who may know more about the town's secrets than he lets on.

What unfolds next is a surprising series of turns that chip away at murky pasts

and half-truths until everything is finally revealed.

"The Woman in the Sable Coat," while full of rewarding surprises, is truly made by Brooks' voice, in which every word has value and helps shape the exact texture of the moment.

Viewing a slice of the world through Nina's and Kate's eyes, it's surprisingly easy to get swept up into the story. It's an exceptionally vivid picture, both of scenery and the inner workings of the characters' minds. □

LeBron James' 40,000-point club won't see anyone joining for a long time. Maybe never. Here's why

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

Never say never. There's a slim chance that one day someone will join LeBron James in the NBA's 40,000-point club.

James crossed the 40,000-point mark on Saturday night, extending the NBA all-time scoring record that he claimed from Kareem Abdul-Jabbar last season.

James already has added about 1,700 points of distance between himself and Abdul-Jabbar's total of 38,387. It might be time to add James' NBA scoring record to the list of "records that never will be broken," like Cal Ripken's 2,632 consecutive games played in baseball, Wayne Gretzky's 2,857 points in the NHL or the UConn women's basketball team winning 111 consecutive games.

Wilt Chamberlain once averaged 50.4 points in a season in the NBA. Nobody else ever has come close to that. The highest any other player averaged in a full season was Elgin Baylor's 38.3 per game; if someone averaged that much for an entire career, they would have had to play all 82 games for almost 13 seasons just to get to get to 40,000 points.

"Nobody will ever, ever touch it," Miami forward Kevin Love, one of James'



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James looks toward fans after scoring during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Denver Nuggets Saturday, March 2, 2024, in Los Angeles. Associated Press

former Cleveland teammates, said last year when James broke Abdul-Jabbar's record.

And remember, James might play another season. Or two. Or more. He easily could reach 43,000 or 44,000 by the time he's finished. That will only make the record more out of reach. Some reasons why it's such a long shot that someone else will reach the milestone:

WHO'S NEXT?

Other than James, there are only seven active players with more than 20,000

points meaning there are only seven players who are halfway to 40,000.

Kevin Durant is closest to James, about 12,000 points behind the all-time scoring leader. Durant's career average of 27.3 points per game is actually 0.2 points better than James' career scoring rate. But Durant if he keeps that average would have to play basically every game until the end of the 2028-29 season to reach the 40,000 mark. He'd be 40 at that time. Durant playing at that age isn't completely unrealistic.

The playing every game for five-plus years part probably is unrealistic; Durant hasn't appeared in all 82 games of a season since 2009-10, when he was 21. There are three active players with higher career per-game scoring averages than James. Durant is one, Luka Doncic (28.5) and Joel Embiid (27.8) are the others.

Doncic just turned 25. A reporter asked him last week if he considered turning 25 to be a milestone birthday. "I feel like I'm 40," Doncic replied. It sure doesn't

seem like Doncic is considering playing 15 more years, based on that answer.

And Embiid is roughly 28,000 points behind James. He'd need to play 1,000 more games, give or take, to reach 40,000. Given his health history and age Embiid turns 30 later this month 1,000 more games seems improbable at best.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

James got to 40,000 through the combination of excellence and longevity. Only Vince Carter played more NBA seasons than James has, and if James as expected comes back for Year 22 next season he'll tie that record.

Playing seemingly forever, that is what turns a tough task into darn near impossible. There have been greater scorers, at least in terms of average. Michael Jordan and Wilt Chamberlain both averaged 30.1 points, but James already has appeared in 400-plus more games than either of those icons. Elgin Baylor averaged 27.4 points in his 14 seasons; he appeared in 846 games and would have had to play in 616 more (at that scoring average) to reach 40,000.

Jerry West averaged roughly the same in his career as James. Again, the longevity is what separates them; West played 932 games. □

Mikaela Shiffrin preparing to return from downhill crash at slalom race in Sweden this weekend



United States' Mikaela Shiffrin celebrates on the podium after winning an alpine ski, women's World Cup slalom race, in Jasna, Slovakia, Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024.

Associated Press

By The Associated Press

Mikaela Shiffrin's return from her downhill crash is still on schedule for this weekend in Sweden, though the American standout might only enter one of the two World Cup races at the resort in Are.

"Mikaela is improving in slalom and feels that the slalom race is still realistic, but the GS (giant slalom) is in question," Shiffrin's team said in a statement Monday. "We will share more in the coming days."

The weekend's action starts with a giant slalom on Saturday and is followed by a slalom on Sunday.

Shiffrin, who has a record 95 World Cup wins, has been out since she sprained the MCL and tibiofibular ligament in her left knee when she crashed in a downhill in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, in January. She was also still recovering from a bone bruise she had at the start of the season.

During her absence, Shiffrin has lost her lead in the

overall standings. She now sits third with 1,209 points, behind Lara Gut-Behrami (1,594) and Federica Brigioni (1,268).

In the giant slalom standings, Shiffrin has been mathematically eliminated from contention for the small crystal globe. She is fourth, 256 points behind Gut-Behrami, who leads those standings, too. Including the Are race, there are two GS events remaining this season. Wins are worth 100 points each. □

Eagles center Jason Kelce retires after 13 NFL seasons and 1 Super Bowl ring

By **DAN GELSTON**
AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Jason Kelce has retired after 13 seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles.

The 36-year-old Kelce officially called it quits Monday at the Eagles' NovaCare Complex, ending a career in which he became not only one of the great centers of his era who played a key role in the franchise's lone Super Bowl championship but a beloved Philly personality and popular podcast host.

"Let's see how long this lasts," said Kelce, wearing a sleeveless Eagles T-shirt, before he burst into tears and needed several moments to compose himself at a news conference attended by his parents, Ed and Donna, and brother Travis, who was wearing sunglasses inside the auditorium. Eagles coach Nick Sirianni sat behind reporters.

Kelce needed 45 minutes to recount his career from his childhood in Ohio to his final days with the Eagles through tears, laughter and many thanks to his biggest influences before he finally announced he was retiring. "I have been the underdog my entire career," he said.



Philadelphia Eagles' Jason Kelce speaks during an NFL football press conference announcing his retirement in Philadelphia, Monday, March 4, 2024.

"And I mean this when I say it, I still wish I was."

Kelce was a sixth-round pick out of Cincinnati in the 2011 draft. The burly, bushy-haired and bearded Kelce has been a stalwart of the offensive line since he was drafted and as an Iron Man after he missed most of the 2012 season with a partially torn MCL and torn ACL.

The moment that endeared him for life to the Philly faithful came at the Super Bowl parade follow-

ing the 2017 season when he dressed as one of Philadelphia's famed Mummers, and the ultimate underdog delivered a fiery, profane speech that whipped the crowd into a frenzy.

"No one likes us! No one likes us! No one likes us! We don't care," Kelce exclaimed that day in February 2018. "We're from Philly! (Expletive) Philly. No one likes us! We don't care!"

Kelce recalled that moment Monday, saying: "I

won't forget the parade and what it meant to the city of Philadelphia. The joy in our community and the closure it gave so many."

"That wasn't my speech," Kelce said. "It was Philadelphia's.

Kelce is the older brother of Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce. The two played each other in the Super Bowl two seasons ago, which was won by the Chiefs. "I won't forget falling short to the Chiefs,"

Jason said Monday and co-host a podcast. Jason attended the Chiefs' playoff game in frigid Buffalo temperatures in this season's playoffs. He ripped off his shirt and chugged beers as he sat in a suite with Travis' girlfriend, Taylor Swift.

It was the Jason Kelce way. He's been a showman off the football field, singing the national anthem at a 76ers game, partying with the Phillie Phanatic and pounding a beer to a roaring ovation at a Phillies postseason game.

But it was his work on the offensive line that made him a star. Kelce ended his career by making 156 straight starts, and he earned six All-Pro Team selections.

He was part of Philadelphia's core four of stars that have experienced droughts and championship runs, multiple coaches and one of the worst collapses in the city's sports history. Fletcher Cox and Brandon Graham are the lone holdovers from former coach Andy Reid's last season with the Eagles in 2012. Lane Johnson completes the four veteran anchors and was a rookie in former coach Chip Kelly's first season in 2013. Kelce is the first one to call it quits. □

Associated Press

Police say former NFL player Braylon Edwards is a hero for saving a man during YMCA assault

By **ED WHITE**
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Former NFL player Braylon Edwards stepped in and saved the life of an 80-year-old man who was being attacked in the locker room at a suburban Detroit YMCA, police said Monday.

"If it wasn't for that intervention, we could very easily be talking about someone's death," said Jeff King, the police chief in Farmington Hills.

Authorities, meanwhile, filed an attempted murder charge against a 20-year-old man for the incident

Friday at the recreation center.

Edwards, 41, said he was "just minding my business" when he heard a dispute about loud music.

"The noise escalates, and then you can hear some pushing and shoving, so you know what fighting sounds like," Edwards told WDIV-TV. "But once I hear a thud, that's when I got up and turned around."

Edwards stopped the assault of an elderly man, who had a severe head injury. The 20-year-old suspect fled on foot before he was captured by police.

"He absolutely saved that man's life," King told The Associated Press. "I've been a police officer going on 29 years. When these assaults are ongoing, really bad things can happen."

The chief said the victim was in critical but stable condition at a hospital Monday.

Oakland County prosecutor Karen McDonald didn't mention Edwards by name but said: "I commend the witness who intervened, and we will seek justice for this victim."

McDonald called it a "vicious, senseless attack." □



New York Jets wide receiver Braylon Edwards heads to the practice field at their NFL football training camp Saturday, July 27, 2013, in Cortland, N.Y.

Associated Press